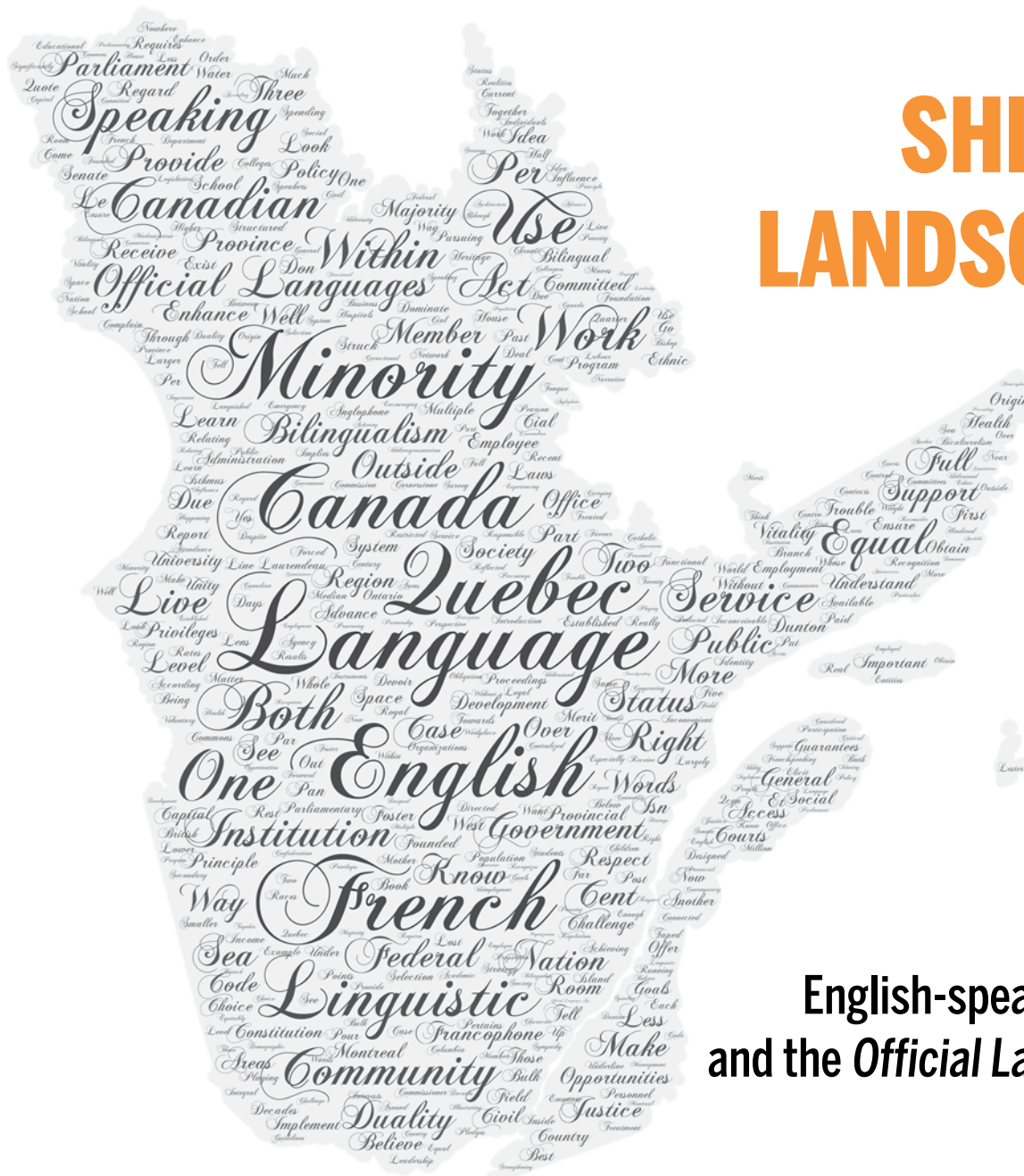


• CANADIAN • DIVERSITY



A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES



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Canadian Diversity is a quarterly publication of the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ACS or sponsoring organizations. The Association for Canadian Studies is a voluntary non-profit organization. It seeks to expand and disseminate knowledge about Canada through teaching, research and publications. The ACS is a scholarly society and a member of the Humanities and Social Science Federation of Canada.

LETTERS

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This special edition of *Canadian Diversity* is published in partnership with the Quebec Community Groups Network.

We would like to thank them for their valued collaboration.



A special thank you to Rita Legault, QCGN Director of Communications and Public Relations, for coordinating the issue.

This edition benefits from the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage.



COVER ART

Chelsea Craig

OUR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES REGIME HAS PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE SURVIVAL OF CANADA AS A COHESIVE NATIONAL ENTITY

GEOFFREY CHAMBERS, President of the Quebec Community Groups Network, has a long track record as an advocate for the preservation of the rights and institutions of Quebec's English-speaking community.

Ask any English-speaking Quebecer about language legislation. You'll very likely get a detailed, informed response about *Charter of the French Language* (Bill 101) in Quebec – but not much awareness of or interest in the federal *Official Languages Act*. Here in Quebec language policy and practice are a perpetual hot topic, but the role of federal legislation is not widely understood or appreciated.

The Francophone majority population in Quebec might view the federal Act as an important mechanism to protect fragile, often fragmented French-speaking communities scattered throughout every other province of Canada. It is easy for Francophones to overlook, and often difficult for them to recognize, the need for equivalent protections for our minority English language community here in Quebec.

This is unfortunate.

Our official languages regime has played a critical – but generally underappreciated – role in the survival of Canada as a cohesive national entity. It has served as a bulwark to defend and support the English-speaking fact in Quebec. This has led many of us to take the Act somewhat for granted, and from

time to time neglect this most potent tool. Our Act has quietly served as an effective support mechanism for the maintenance of our national pan-Canadian collective project.

Facing nine provinces and three territories operating entirely in English – with an unsustainable variation in New Brunswick – a Quebec operating and living 100% in French would have a very short half-life. Happily, our situation is different. Our collective national project is rooted in a commitment entered into freely over a century and a half ago that two, highly integrated but distinct communities and cultural entities embark together on a project of nationhood.

“Our Act has quietly served as an effective support mechanism for the maintenance of our national pan-Canadian collective project.”

– Geoffrey Chambers

There was not unanimous support for this undertaking then. There certainly isn't now. But, now as then, forces which

champion a parting of ways, or a redefinition of the founding principles, are in the minority. Circumstances evolve. Economic, demographic, ideological, and technological factors adjust. Nothing is unalterably carved in stone. Without a commitment to a respectful language and culture defining regime such as the one exemplified by the *Official Languages Act*, the chances for the survival of any recognizable future version of Canada would be negligible.

This is an enormous burden for any piece of legislation to carry. Our Constitution, buttressed by common law and rights-based instruments developed and refined going back all the way back to the *Magna Carta*, provides the foundational defining framework for and of our society. As grandiose as it may seem to say, here in Canada the *Official Languages Act* belongs in that category of key mechanisms which shape the way we live, work and evolve together.

“Our undertaking now is to redesign and modernize the Act in light of what the last half century has taught us about the value and benefits of linguistic duality.”

- Geoffrey Chambers

Within this conceptual framework we must include the federal government's language infrastructure stemming from the Act. As a declaration of principles and intent, the Act empowers support for official language minority communities from sea to sea to sea. With Canadian Heritage serving as the engine and successive federal Action Plans and Roadmaps providing much of the fuel, official language minority communities including our own benefit from a spectrum of policies, programs, and funding initiatives from numerous partners including Health Canada, Justice Canada, Treasury Board, and Employment and Social Development Canada, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

In Quebec, defence of our civil liberties through litigation – with critical federal support from the Court Challenges Program – and through dialogue with provincial authorities has only been possible through the advocacy capacity in the English-speaking community underpinned by federal programs.

Virtually all of the changes and improvements in provincial language legislation over our last three generations, have flowed from the Act and its related programs. These include:

- the acknowledgement of the existence and rights of the English-speaking community in the preamble to the *Charter of the French Language*;
- the establishment of our legally enforceable right to receive Health and Social Services in English.

- literally dozens of textual amendments to that law defending the interests and rights of the English-language minority community;
- virtually all of the constitutional litigation and resulting jurisprudence – access to education, the sign law, use of English in the courts and legislature, etc.

All these achievements would have been impossible without community leadership initiatives supported by the backing of federal programs furthered by the Act.

The *Official Languages Act* has performed a vital service. It is needed.

Our undertaking now is to redesign and modernize the Act in light of what the last half century has taught us about the value and benefits of linguistic duality. We must ensure that we have all the tools to address the challenges we face today and will face over the next phase in the evolution of this inspiring, exemplary, and successful project of human civilization we call Canada.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN QUEBEC AND DEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CANADIAN

MIRIAM TAYLOR is the Director of Publications and Partnerships at the Association for Canadian Studies and the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration.

This special edition of *Canadian Diversity*, published in partnership with the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) and entitled, *Shifting Landscapes: English-Speaking Quebec and the Official Languages Act*, looks at the English-speaking minority community in Quebec and its relation to the Act.

If you are an English-speaking Quebecer feeling beleaguered or bewildered by on-going language controversies; if you are curious about the history of your minority language community; or simply wanting to know more about language rights and policies, this issue is a must-read. If you are not an English-speaking Quebecer, but are interested in the way in which the defence of minority language communities has helped define Canada, you will find this edition both thought-provoking and educational.

QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers' foreword sets the stage by highlighting the vital role played by the *Official Languages Act* in the shaping and survival of our "national pan-Canadian collective project". Divided into four sections, the issue then considers different aspects of this fundamental proposition.

The first section, *Shifting Landscapes*, gives us an overview of the complex history that provides a context and explanation for our current reality. Full of interesting historical anecdotes, David Johnston maps the evolving vision of successive Official

Language commissioners, tracing the transformation – in perception at least – of the English language community in Quebec from privileged representatives of a larger majority to a fragile minority in need of protection.

Through his compelling account of F. R. Scott's vision of Canada, former commissioner Graham Fraser recounts both the successes and failures of this larger than life figure. In the end, it is Scott's legacy we are left with, his clarity of thought in defining language rights as human rights, a principle that endures and continues to guide us to this day.

While also taking an historical approach, the second duo of articles considers the way minority language communities have contributed to *Our Vision of Canada*. Citing linguistic duality as a fundamental Canadian value, QCGN's Director General, Sylvia Martin-Laforge, points to the distinctive challenges faced by English-speaking Quebecers compared to their Francophone counterparts in the rest of Canada, evoking the need for equitable rather than identical treatment to allow each of the language minorities a truly equal voice.

Camille Harper's historical treatment describes some hard-fought battles in the linguistic arena and, like Martin-Laforge, emphasizes the accomplishment of the Act in championing the equal value of both official language groups no matter whether they live as majority or minority groups in their respective communities.

The articles in the third section, *The Official Languages Act as a Tool for English-speaking Quebecers*, also allude to the way in which the protection of minority language rights has defined Canada, and recommend that the Act be understood by the English-speaking minority in Quebec as a valuable resource that must be more fully espoused and made use of. Taking his responsibility as an English-speaking Member of Parliament to heart, Anthony Housefather has adopted the role of spokesperson and defender of the community's interests in Ottawa. Remarking on the diversity of needs within the English language community in Quebec, he encourages all English-speaking Quebecers to learn more about the Act in order to put it to best use as a legal protection of their vitality and development.

Referring to her youth in 1990s Quebec in the shadow of acrimonious language politics, lawyer Marion Sandilands feels that many Anglo-Quebecers may be conditioned to see language as a space where competition reigns. Like Housefather, she encourages them to educate themselves about the rights and entitlements conferred by the Act and familiarize themselves with the vision it champions – one in which the vitality of the two minority language communities is seen as a positive for all concerned.

In the fourth and final section, Jack Jedwab, president and CEO of the Association for Canadian Studies, makes us aware in his two studies of *The Imperative to Define and Educate*. The task of defining who makes up the English language community in Quebec is as complex as it is vitally essential – particularly in the context of the growing numbers of people of mixed linguistic heritage who need to be better accounted for in our language policies, planning, and politics.

In his second article, Jedwab studies self-assessed knowledge of the *Official Languages Act* and of the rights accorded therein. He regrets the failure of history curricula to educate about this vital piece of legislation, concluding with the need to ensure that Quebecers – and indeed all Canadians – gain a better understanding of official language minority communities and the essential role they have played in our country's history.

This special edition on language rights touches on history, law, philosophy and society, but it is ultimately about our vision of Canada and the way linguistic duality has shaped that vision. Perhaps we can return to Chambers' foreword to sum things up: "the *Official Languages Act* has performed a vital service... in the evolution of this inspiring, exemplary, and successful project of human civilization we call Canada... It is needed."

FROM SPICER TO THÉBERGE: 50 YEARS IN THE LIFE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AND THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES OF QUEBEC

DAVID JOHNSTON is Commissioner Raymond Th  berge's Regional Representative in Quebec and Nunavut. He joined the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in September of 2014, after 33 years at the *Montreal Gazette*, where he last served as editorial-page editor.

All eight of Canada's Commissioners of Official Languages over the past 50 years have had a relationship with the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ) that has been shaped by views they brought to the job and by events that took place while they were in office.

With the benefit of hindsight, what we see in the evolution of these relationships since the creation of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in 1970 is a progressive realization that the ESCQ are a vulnerable minority – despite the growing international influence of English.

The first Commissioner, Keith Spicer, famously caused a stir in the spring of 1973 when he referred to English-speaking Quebecers as “Westmount Rhodesians.” This was during a question-and-answer session in Washington, D.C., before members of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States.

“You’ve got to keep running. You’ve got to stand up for yourself. Majorities are naturally not inclined to think very much about minorities, and so minorities need to stand up, engage, and help shape or change perceptions.”

– Graham Fraser

“Unaccustomed to facing such learned assemblies, the Commissioner shot from the hip and, on his return to Canada, all Hell broke loose,” according to Commissioner Spicer’s self-effacing 1972–73 Annual Report, released in March of 1974. “His hasty backpedalling about the term’s ‘affectionate’ overtones convinced few, or at least not all.”

It was noted in that annual report, however, that Spicer, a native of Toronto, did not coin the phrase, although care was taken not to mention who had. In fact, Ren   L  vesque is credited with having first used the term – or rather, a variation of it, “white Rhodesians” – and not in reference to Westmount but rather to the Anglophones of his Gasp   hometown of New Carlisle. In a *Chatelaine* magazine interview published in April of 1966, while still a Lesage Liberal cabinet minister, L  vesque told journalist H  l  ne Pilote that New Carlisle was Quebec itself in microcosm: “New Carlisle had been populated by a handful of Loyalists who had settled there, and they kept control of all powers. They were not wicked. They treated the French Canadians as the white Rhodesians treat their blacks. They don’t hurt them, but they hold all the money, and so the beautiful villas and the good schools.”

Spicer otherwise never paid much attention to English-speaking Quebecers in his annual reports. His successor, Max Yalden, also a native of Toronto, explained in his own first annual report that this was because “on the whole they have fared quite well in that province.”



Keith Spicer
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

In his 1999 book *Community Besieged: The Anglophone Minority and the Politics of Quebec*, author Garth Stevenson noted a sweeping change in Commissioner Yalden's attitude toward Quebec's English-speaking community throughout his term in office from 1977 to 1983, a change that reflected the communities' own changing vision of themselves. A lot changed in Quebec during those seven years. In 1977, Quebec passed the *Charte de la langue française*, or Bill 101, which introduced severe new restrictions (some later overturned in court) on the use and visibility of English in Quebec. Three years later, in 1980, there was the first of what would be two referendums on Quebec's separation from Canada (the second was in 1995). The years 1977-1983 also coincided with the peak of the so-called Anglophone exodus from Quebec.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEGLECTS ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS

In his third annual report, Yalden chastised the federal government for what he saw as its neglect of Quebec Anglophones. And with each of his next four annual reports, Yalden came to express great dismay with the way the language issue was playing out in Quebec.

"What began as a legitimate language reform on behalf of French has deteriorated at times into something a good deal less commendable," he wrote.

Yalden's successor, D'Iberville Fortier, a native of Montreal, felt the same way. Like Yalden, he came to the job of Commissioner from the foreign diplomatic service. He was the first and still only Francophone Quebecer to hold the job of Commissioner on a permanent basis.

"It remains disturbing, from our point of view," says Fortier's 1987 Annual Report, released in March of 1988, "that the self-confidence of French in Quebec is still so uncertain that the use of Canada's other official language... must be severely limited. We trust that most Canadians can see the legitimacy of giving pride of place to the majority language of the province and of positively encouraging its recognition and use in as many social contexts as possible. But the salvation of French, in Quebec or elsewhere, must surely lie in positively asserting its own demographic weight, cultural vigour and innate attractiveness, and not in humbling the competition."

"Humbling the competition." Not since "Westmount Rhodesians" had a Commissioner of Official Languages provoked such indignation in Quebec. In Quebec City, the opposition Parti Québécois tabled a motion to condemn Fortier and his remarks. The governing Bourassa Liberals took the motion and amended it to make it even stronger, and the amended motion passed unanimously.

On the afternoon that the motion was passed, Robert Libman, a young architect from the west end of Montreal, was driving home from work when he heard CJAD radio editorialist Gordon Atkinson deliver a thunderous denunciation of the Fortier motion – and of the Anglophone Liberal members in particular who had voted in favour of it, in concert with their Francophone colleagues.

As Libman recounted in his 1995 book, *Riding the Rapids*: "I was driving my car on my way home from work, listening to Atkinson's radio editorial, and started shaking my head. Then I impulsively began to honk the horn in defiance. He had touched a nerve in me. Something had to be done to light a fire under our community and let the majority know we were fed up and not going to take it any more."



Max Yalden
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages



D'iberville Fortier
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

1993. But back in 1988, along with invoking the notwithstanding clause, the government introduced Bill 178 to prohibit any use of English on outdoor signs but while allowing some limited use on indoor signs.

FIRST AND ONLY FRANCOPHONE QUEBECER TO SERVE AS COMMISSIONER

Fortier's seven-year term ended in 1990 and he was replaced by Victor Goldbloom, the first and still only English-speaking Quebecer to serve as Commissioner. Goldbloom, a native of Montreal, went further than Fortier in his criticism of Quebec language policy. He didn't just criticize Quebec in his annual reports; he made it publicly known as well that he went to Quebec City to meet with elected officials to argue for the repeal of Bill 178. As a former Quebec cabinet minister in the 1970s, the fluently bilingual Goldbloom was known to be a Francophile, and so his interventions were not seen to have been anti-French.

It was in the aftermath of that drive home that Libman took the first steps toward the formation of the now-dormant Equality Party. In the 1989 Quebec general election, Equality had four people elected from Montreal ridings to the National Assembly, including party leader Libman and Atkinson himself. The election was held in the year after the Bourassa government invoked the notwithstanding clause to shield itself from the 1988 Supreme Court of Canada ruling on the language of commercial signage in Quebec. The court had ruled that it was unreasonable to completely ban English on signs in order to promote French. On the other hand, the court suggested bilingual signage with French as the predominant language would be constitutionally sound. The Bourassa government eventually embraced the high court's suggestion in

"The Commissioner of Official Languages has had several encounters with ministers and officials of the government of Quebec," explained Goldbloom's 1992 Annual Report. "He has consistently expressed the view that the future vitality and security of the French language depended, not on the exclusion of English from signs, but on the quality of education and on practical measures to ensure that French-speaking Canadians can work in French everywhere in the province. He also made it clear that Bill 178 has given Quebec a negative image in the rest of Canada..."

Dyane Adam replaced Goldbloom in 1999. A Francophone from Casselman, Ontario, Adam grew up in close proximity to Montreal and to Quebec and came to office with some appre-



Victor Goldbloom
Courtesy of the Quebec Community Groups Network



Dyane Adam
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages



Graham Fraser
Courtesy of the Quebec Community Groups Network

ciation for the similarities – and differences – between the English-speaking minority in Quebec and the French-speaking minorities outside of Quebec. She shared the concerns of most Francophones in Quebec over the fragility of French in Quebec but recognized at the same time that the English-speaking Quebecers were vulnerable. Like Goldbloom, she was not afraid to engage directly with Quebec’s elected officials on matters within provincial jurisdiction affecting Anglophones. She was a strong defender of historically majority-English municipalities in Quebec whose bilingual status under the provincial *Charte de la langue française* was threatened by the Bouchard government’s municipal mergers.

AFFECTION FOR QUEBEC AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

Commissioner Graham Fraser, although born and raised in Ottawa, was no stranger to Quebec when he replaced Adam in 2006 for what turned out to be an extended 10-year term of office. Fraser had lived and worked as a journalist in Quebec City in the late 1970s and early 1980s, first for Montreal’s *The Gazette* and later Toronto’s *The Globe and Mail*. In 1984, he published a book, *René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power*, that still stands today as the best English-language account of Lévesque’s premiership. Fraser came to the job of Commissioner already held in high esteem by the Quebec political class. His affection for Quebec and for the French language was clearly evident, and it gave him a certain latitude in what he could say publicly and privately in Quebec on behalf of the English-speaking minority.

In the last half of his mandate, Fraser accelerated his efforts to try to persuade the government of Quebec to create a sec-

retariat within the Quebec public administration for relations with its English-speaking communities. Premier Jean Charest was not keen on the idea. Neither was Premier Philippe Couillard or even his English Liberal MNAs. The MNAs repeated Couillard’s contention that Anglophones were equal partners in Quebec with Francophones, and that creation of a secretariat would send the message that they were somehow second-class Quebecers.

STRUCTURE FOR LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

In early January of 2015, before the extended Christmas holidays had ended, Fraser granted an interview to a Canadian Press reporter in which he said he had failed to persuade English-speaking MNAs to change their position on the merits of a secretariat. He stated that outside of Quebec, secretariats or other formal points of contact between provincial governments and their Francophone minorities were working very well, and that Quebec should consider it.

The Globe and Mail posted the Canadian Press story online early on a Sunday morning, under the (presumably) inadvertently provocative headline of “Federal languages commissioner wants Quebec to do more to help anglophones.” Sunday is a slow news day, especially just after Christmas, and as such the *Globe* story was picked up by just about every major Quebec media outlet. It dominated the news cycle in Quebec for an exceptional 72 hours. Two years later, as fate would have it, in June of 2017, the Couillard government announced the creation of the *Secrétariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers*. MNAs praised it as an idea whose time had come.



Ghislaine Saikaley
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages



Raymond Th  berge
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

In the months before he left office in December of 2016, Commissioner Fraser gave exit interviews to the editorial boards of newspapers and the electronic media. One of the images he evoked in his last meeting as Commissioner with *The Montreal Gazette* editorial board was that for members of linguistic minorities, trying to assert their place in society can feel like trying to run up a downward-moving escalator. If you stop, you go backwards. His parting message to English-speaking Quebecers was: “You’ve got to keep running. You’ve got to stand up for yourself. Majorities are naturally not inclined to think very much about minorities, and so minorities need to stand up, engage, and help shape or change perceptions.”

LINGUISTIC INSECURITY

Late in Fraser’s mandate, a decision was made internally at the Office of the Commissioner in Gatineau to take a fresh look at English-speaking Quebecers and the challenges that they face. The work continued through the 14 months that Ghislaine Saikaley served as interim Commissioner from December of 2016 to January of 2018 and spilled over into the beginning of the seven-year term of current Commissioner Raymond Th  berge. The review identified three major challenges:

- Perception
- Linguistic insecurity
- Representational capacity

While in office, Saikaley appealed to Canadian Heritage to do more to financially support new sectoral expertise in

English-speaking Quebec. The community already has sectoral infrastructure strength in education and health, but clear weaknesses in representational capacity were identified when it came to youth, seniors and women.

And while census data suggests the English-speaking community of Quebec had high rates of bilingualism, subsequent research by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) – notably its 2009 *Creating Spaces* study – have shown that young people are unhappy with the levels of French-language proficiency. Nowhere in the world does an English-speaking community speak a second language as widely as the Anglophones of Quebec speak French, but the proficiency bar for French is high for meaningful participation in the Quebec mainstream.

As for perception, yes, there is still a perception, all these years after Commissioner Spicer’s remarks in Washington, D.C., in 1973, that all English-speaking Quebecers are rich and live in Westmount.

PERCEPTION PROBLEM

But as Commissioner Th  berge, a Franco-Manitoban, said in his first speech to QCGN at its annual general meeting in June 2018, the perception problem goes deeper than that.

“I lived in Montr  al 30-odd years ago,” said Th  berge, “when I was a PhD student at McGill; so, I know all about the enduring stereotype of the pampered Quebec Anglophone minority living in Westmount. Nothing could be further from the truth. But as someone who grew up outside of Quebec, I can tell you that the perception problem goes much deeper than that: many Canadians outside of Quebec don’t even know there’s an English-speaking minority in Quebec!”

Fifty years after Commissioner Spicer took office, there is still an overriding problem of perception facing English-speaking Quebec. They have their place in Quebec, and they value their relationship with the French-speaking majority. But they have become an increasingly fragile minority that sometimes hesitates to stand up and be heard. Fraser and now Th  berge have recognized this need for English-speaking Quebecers to affirm their rights, but also on a more basic level, to make themselves better known, and better understood, both inside and outside of Quebec.

F. R. SCOTT AND HIS FIGHT FOR THE ENGLISH MINORITY IN QUEBEC

GRAHAM FRASER is a Senior Fellow at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa. He is editing the diary that F. R. Scott kept during the years of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

In March 1964, F. R. Scott attended a public hearing of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Sherbrooke. It was a familiar part of the province for him; he had attended Bishop's College, as it was then called, and was part owner of a summer cottage in North Hatley, not far away.

"One young separatist said that he cared not in the slightest for any of the French speaking minorities in other Provinces, since they were lost anyway, and there was only one minority in the country that mattered at all: this was the English-speaking minority in Quebec. As for it, the sooner it moved west the better," Scott wrote in his journal.

"*J'y suis, j'y reste,*" retorted Scott. I am here and I am staying. It is a phrase that was attributed to the French General Mac Mahon during the siege of Sebastopol during the Crimean War, and it was also the name of a play that was performed in Paris in 1953 when Scott visited Paris.

It was a characteristic quip by Scott: quick-witted, erudite, and profoundly true. Unlike many of his generation of English Quebecers – he was born in 1899 – he was bilingual and involved in the political life of Quebec. When he was named to the Royal Commission in 1963, he discovered that he was on a first-name basis with all of the Quebec members of the Commission (co-chair André Laurendeau, labour leader Jean Marchand, journalist Jean-Louis Gagnon) – and with the exception of the other co-chair, Davidson Dunton, who was originally from Montreal, he knew none of the members from the rest of the country.

"The right to one's language in all personal and private relations is a human right. It is as inherent in man as his freedom of speech or of conscience."

– F. R. Scott

It was not surprising that he should be named to the Royal Commission. He was Dean of Law at McGill, one of the founders of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a poet, translator, constitutionalist and human rights activist who had been at Oxford at the same time as Lester Pearson, the Prime Minister who named him. As early as 1947, he had argued that section 133 of the British North America Act, which required that federal laws be passed in English and French and that both languages have equal status in the Parliament of Canada and the legislature of Quebec, meant that every province was, in fact bilingual.

In an article in the *Queen's Quarterly* in 1947, Scott argued that as a result of Section 133, "Canada is a bilingual country, and British Columbia can truthfully be called a bilingual province."

His view was that Quebec was historically, culturally, constitutionally and legally a bilingual province, and that this bilingualism should be extended to the rest of the country. André Laurendeau, in contrast, felt that Quebec was the home of a French-speaking society and that this was under threat; that

the protection of the French language and culture in Quebec was the first priority, followed by the protection of minority language communities outside Quebec. When Laurendeau died in 1968, his position was defended by Paul Lacoste.

A few months before the Sherbrooke meeting, in October 1963, Scott had lunch with Michael Pitfield, one of his former students who would go on to be Pierre Trudeau's Clerk of the Privy Council. Pitfield expressed concern that the Lesage government was removing English Quebecers from board positions which they had previously held, citing a museum board which previously had three Anglophones out of the dozen board members and then had none.

Scott's first reaction was to reflect that this might actually be helpful in getting bilingualism accepted in the rest of the country.

"This I must look into carefully, since Quebec is officially a bilingual province and the degree to which other provinces will accept official bilingualism may largely depend upon the degree to which they think they have to apply it strictly," he wrote in his journal. "The less Quebec applies it, the easier it is for them to adopt it."

But as the pressure for French unilingualism in Quebec increased over the subsequent years, Scott's view changed.

He was a strong voice in favour of bilingualism, and the institutions of the English minority in Quebec – and dissented from the Commission's recommendation that French should become the working language in Quebec.

In August 1967, in a comment objecting to two paragraphs in a draft of the first volume of the report, Scott explicitly laid out his view of language as a human right. It is an eloquent defence of language as a right, and of the English-speaking minority.

"The right to one's language in all personal and private relations is a human right. It is as inherent in man as his freedom of speech or of conscience," he wrote. "It starts with mother and child; it continues into wider social groupings. It is not granted by the State or by Constitutions. Laws may protect it and may prescribe conditions under which it may be reasonably exercised, particularly in dealing with state authorities."

He went on to dismiss the idea of establishing more than two official languages, to stress the importance of the English language in Quebec, the English-speaking community – then 800,000 strong and the largest language minority in Canada – and to underline the importance of the existing 1867 constitution.

"Their linguistic relations with the French – a good example of equal partnership – have been developed over 200 years, and

provide a model which is a powerful influence for changes in other provinces which have been slow to grant French similar rights where they are justified even by their much smaller French minorities," he wrote. "The economic development in Quebec creates difficult problems for the French majority that we are going to speak about in another volume, and to which an answer must be found. I am not suggesting that the linguistic status quo in Quebec is to remain as at present; far from it. But section 133 of the B.N.A. Act is not an obstacle, but a great help, and it makes for an equal partnership within Quebec and is based on human rights which even the independence of Quebec would not call into question."

"[i]f human rights and harmonious relations between cultures are forms of the beautiful, then the state is a work of art that is never finished."

- F. R. Scott

Scott, who had prided himself on his positive relations with many Quebec nationalist poets, became isolated when he supported the introduction of the War Measures Act in 1970. A further breach occurred with the introduction of Bill 22 by the Bourassa government in 1974, which declared French to be the official language of Quebec. The bill galvanized Scott into defence of the English minority. Scott went through the bill clause by clause, declaring them to be "misleading," "clearly unconstitutional," "discriminatory," "undemocratic," and "coercive and oppressive." In one marginal note he wrote "Building contracts for McGill must be in French" and in another "Minority has no right to its language from Hydro!"

He maintained, as he always had, that, for all federal undertakings, English as well as French was an official language in Quebec. "So, when the bill says French is THE official language, it suggests it is the only official language, and this is quite false," Scott told *The Montreal Star*, listing off points where the bill was unconstitutional, undemocratic and coercive.

The interview, while passionate and detailed, had little impact: on July 31, 1974, the bill was adopted, becoming the Quebec Official Language Act. Scott joined a legal team challenging the constitutionality of the legislation on behalf of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, but the appeal from the initial rejection by the Quebec Court of Appeal failed.

A few months later, his tone shifted to rage and frustration at the language situation in Quebec in a letter to his old friend and CCF-NDP colleague George Cadbury in January 1977.

"A dumber and more frightened crowd than the English minority in Quebec it would be hard to find," he fumed. "Business won't lift a finger; it will conform, or move out leaving a skeleton

staff behind fed instructions by computer from Toronto. McGill is frozen with fright; its money, even the large amount coming from Ottawa, is channelled through Quebec. The only active fighters are the tiny little Protestant school boards and the Italians. We don't deserve to survive as we have no collective will to live."

But by the time it reached the Court of Appeal, the Quebec Official Language Act no longer existed. The Parti Québécois had been elected in 1976 and in 1977 it replaced the Official Language Act with Bill 101, which became the even more stringent *Charter of the French Language*.

SCOTT'S WORST FEARS HAD COME TO PASS

Scott's worst fears of Quebec unilingualism had come to pass. His friends remarked on his bitterness. "You know for years I've spoken French whenever I've had the opportunity," he said to Eugene Forsey during a discussion on Bill 22. "Now I'm damned if I'll speak French."

He became equally bitter that Trudeau, despite strong urging from his former mentor, did not use the federal government's power of disallowance to strike down the Quebec language legislation.

In January 1985, Scott died. Near the end of his life, he wondered if he had been a failure, if he should have focused on poetry instead of politics.

It is true that his vision for Quebec and Canada did not survive. Canada's language regime is characterized by remarkable asymmetry, with Quebec being unilingual French, New Brunswick being officially bilingual, the territory of Nunavut being officially trilingual, and other provinces having a wide range of minority-language policies from substantial to almost non-existent. It is a regime built on a series of compromises, and Scott hated compromises, above all on questions that he saw as fundamental: minority-language rights and the powers of the federal government.

In the years that followed, the Supreme Court corrected some of the elements in Quebec's language legislation that so outraged Scott. The Blaikie decision by the Supreme Court re-established that laws must be enacted in English and French in Quebec, and that regulations must be in English and in French. It made clear that the rights of "persons" to use English and French in the courts. Then, in 1988, three years after Scott's death, the Supreme Court ruled in the Ford case that while it was permissible for Quebec to insist on having French on signs, it was unconstitutional to forbid the use of a language.

Since Sandra Djwa's biography, published IN 1987, darker

references to Scott have circulated. He has been described as "paternalist and condescending [...] Victorian and aristocratic;" "a cultivated, well-intentioned, and polite gentleman-poet who was slightly out of synch with the community he wanted to join;" and a "poet reformer domestic tyrant."

However, 35 years after his death, it is also easier to see the magnitude of his achievements. His influence on Pierre Trudeau, while not as great as he had hoped, was huge, as it was on several generations of lawyers and legal scholars. His contribution to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was enormous. His thinking was an inspiration for the debates that led to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. His clarity of thought defining language rights as human rights laid the groundwork for an edifice of jurisprudence on language. And his insistence on the rule of law presaged the critical role the Courts have played in defining language rights. The ground-breaking Supreme Court decision on the secession of Quebec, with its definition of minority rights as one of the central elements of Canadian democracy, stands on the foundation that he helped build. F. R. Scott laid out clearly, before the courts established the principle in law and jurisprudence, that language rights are human rights.

As he so eloquently put it, "[i]f human rights and harmonious relations between cultures are forms of the beautiful, then the state is a work of art that is never finished."

And the English community, with which Scott had such a deep and complicated relationship, has endured and transformed itself, becoming more bilingual than ever before. Now, 56 years after he made the quip, 900,000 members of the English-speaking community can say, as Scott did, "*J'y suis, j'y reste*."

TOWARD TRULY EQUAL VOICE AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT:

QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING MINORITY COMMUNITY AND THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

SYLVIA MARTIN-LAForge, Director General of the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), has more than 30 years experience dealing with official language communities in Ontario and Quebec.

More than three decades of work to support and apply the *Official Languages Act* have driven home, at least for me, an obvious truth.

Yes, the *Official Languages Act* provides an admirable cornerstone for our national identity and unity. Yes, this legislative framework supports the development of both the English and French linguistic minority communities. And yes, across federal jurisdictions the Act formally enshrines equality of status, equality of support, and equality of voice in the use of English and French. Yet over the past half-century, the benefits that have flowed from the Act have proven of far greater scope and positive effect for French-speaking communities outside Quebec than for the English-speaking community within Quebec. Simply put, after 50 years in operation the Act has failed to create a level playing field between Canada's two minority-language groups.

For decades, English-speaking Quebec has focussed on the unsettling reverberations of Bill 101. Even individual bilingualism is questioned, as the 'Bonjour-Hi' controversy demonstrates. English is habitually portrayed as a growing threat to the French language. Relentless institutional erosion continues to diminish our community's governance over education, health, social services, and other areas of provincial jurisdiction. So, for our linguistic minority, the *Official Languages Act* has largely been perceived as a less than tangible presence, distant and with little discernable or immediate influence or impact on our day to day lives. We have failed to fully recognize the Act's value and its potential – both as a framework and as a beacon.

“Quebec’s English-speaking minority faces fundamentally different problems than the ones confronting our Francophone counterparts across the rest of Canada. We do not face their level of linguistic insecurity. But our vitality and our ability to access services in our own language are compromised.”

– Sylvia Martin-Laforge

Our French-language counterparts outside Quebec, however, have taken the opposite tack: national leadership within official languages is comprised almost entirely of Francophones. Those with French mother tongue dominate the relevant Parliamentary committees in the House of Commons and the Senate; the Official Languages divisions of federal departments; the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages; and all functional areas within federal institutions and agencies responsible for implementing the *Official Languages Act*.

In practice, official languages policy is seen and treated as code for supporting the needs and aspirations of Francophone communities outside Quebec. This has been demonstrated to me throughout decades of work on official languages policy at the federal, provincial, and now community level, in the context of both English and French linguistic minority communities.

Francophones in the rest of Canada have embraced the Act,

adopting an energetic, assertive approach. Over the years they have strongly influenced the design and implementation of policies and programs as well as the evolution of the Act itself. In contrast, Quebec's English-speaking community have not judged the Act could prove equally powerful for us. We ended up on the sidelines, generally absent from the conversation. Ottawa hasn't treated us as a full partner under the Act. Nor have the provinces. Nor have Francophones outside Quebec.

As a result, the bulk of Canada's official languages strategy, policy, and program spending continues to be focussed on and directed toward Francophone communities outside Quebec.

With its 1963 report, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism established the foundation for our nation's current approach to official languages. Across the federal space, it carved out generous room for French Canadians; the *Official Languages Act* was broadly structured to apply to proceedings of Parliament; administration of justice; services to the public; and language of work.

The Act was a legislative creature in the context of its era; it was inconceivable a half century ago that any English-speaking Canadian would encounter difficulties receiving service in English from a federal department or agency; face obstacles using English working inside the federal civil service; or be hindered from seeking employment opportunities within public-service ranks.

There were other factors particular to Quebec. Equipped with our own public-school system, three universities, a network of junior colleges as well as hospitals and health and social service institutions, for many years the English language community in Quebec simply hadn't truly considered itself or viewed itself as a minority. The needle on that has moved. Many have come to grips with the reality of our minority linguistic status. English-speaking Quebecers have finally begun to recognize that, in sharp contrast to our Francophone counterparts outside Quebec, our community has not sufficiently understood, employed or properly developed many of the tools the Act provides.

The general introduction of Book 1 of the Laurendeau-Dunton report serves as our beacon:

"The principle of equality implies respect for the idea of minority status, both in the country as a whole and in each of its regions. Within the provinces or smaller administrative entities, both Anglophones and Francophones live in some cases as a majority, in some cases as a minority. Since the English-speaking population is larger across the country, its members are less often in the minority; but they are the minority in some areas, especially in the province of Quebec. **In either case, the principle of equality requires that the minority receive generous treatment.**"



Laurendeau et Dunton
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

The English-speaking minority language community within Quebec comprises 13.7 % of Quebec's population. With just over 1 million people, English-speaking Quebecers very slightly outnumber the total French-speaking population distributed through the rest of Canada. So, our nation's two linguistic minorities are virtually of the same population size. But the circumstances under which our two linguistic minorities live vary dramatically. So do the challenges to community vitality and sometimes viability with which each group must grapple.

At its core, the Act entrenches the principle of equitable treatment. But equitable treatment does not mean identical treatment. It means equivalent treatment, appropriate to the needs.

This means equivalent resources are made available and channeled to address obstacles to vitality and viability brought forward by and from each community. For instance, an English-speaking senior in the Eastern Townships who never learned to carry on a conversation in French has a completely different issue from a French-mother-tongue Manitoban who gets by in English but has little or no access to health and social services in his or her own language.

EQUITABLE DOES NOT MEAN IDENTICAL

Their individual problems are entirely different. So are the individual solutions to surmount them. But under the guidance and framework provided by the Act, the unifying principle is that each has an equal opportunity to receive the most effective possible assistance, distributed in an equitable but rarely identical way.

Quebec's English-speaking minority faces fundamentally different problems than the ones confronting our Francophone

counterparts across the rest of Canada. We do not face their level of linguistic insecurity. But our vitality and our ability to access services in our own language are compromised.

We now live in a province that requires the words “Emergency Room” be taped over on some hospital signs that have long been bilingual. Our premier recently mused that perhaps our language rights should be restricted to “Historic Anglos.” Quebec has increasingly centralized management and control of our health and social service institutions and, most recently, our school board system. Deeply rooted institutions that our community built and nurtured – and on which our community is largely dependent – have been systematically dismantled or absorbed. Their governance structures have been discarded. The long-time ‘par et pour’ approach to our services has been eliminated.

In 21 federal institutions in Quebec outside the National Capital Region, the percentage of English-speaking employees is far lower than their demographic weight in the community. Correctional Services Canada employed 3,713 people in Quebec in 2015. Only 110 (2.9%) were English-speaking Quebecers. Clearly, for our English-speaking linguistic minority, this does not constitute “generous treatment.”

A glaring example of our inability to access services in our own language is in the area of justice. While Quebec’s courts have a formal legal obligation to work in both official languages, this official right is crippled by a disastrous shortage of bilingual staff across our provincial justice system – outside Montreal in particular.

We are learning from our Francophone counterparts who have benefitted from official language programs in many sec-

tors still underdeveloped in Quebec. Over the past decade, a youth group and a senior group have emerged from our ranks. With an access to justice group mobilized, Justice Canada has invested over the past five years to begin to address the chronic issue of poor access in English to Quebec’s justice system.

AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO FOUNDING PEOPLES

The Laurendeau-Dunton report got it right: to ensure generous space for French federally, both language groups have to be protected from sea to sea to sea, embodying “an equal partnership between the two founding” peoples, as Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson phrased it. Our linguistic duality is a fundamental Canadian value. As we reconsider and reinvigorate the legislative, policy and process architecture around official languages, let us bind together those components with the guiding principles of equal voice and equitable treatment.

OCGN believes the Act as well as the regulations, guidelines, policies and programs that flow from it, must not favour one language or one official linguistic minority community over another. There is a long way to go. But we are confident this approach will help bring the situation into balance. Our goal is to ensure symmetry of both official language communities. Equivalence of treatment will ensure that the vitality and viability of both national official language minority communities is fostered and fully protected on an equitable basis.

With Canada moving forward on the all-important modernization of the *Official Languages Act*, it is critical that the vitality of both national official language minority communities be fostered and protected on an equitable basis.



Bilingual signage at Lachute Hospital
Photo courtesy of Jim Warbanks

A LAW FOR NATIONAL UNITY: PIERRE-ELLIOT TRUDEAU'S ATTEMPT TO UNITE CANADA'S TWO SOLITUDES

CAMILLE HARPER is a reporter for *La Liberté*, Manitoba's only French-language newspaper since 1913.

Adopted on July 9, 1969, by the Canadian Parliament and proclaimed on September 7 of the same year, the *Official Languages Act* was a response to the growing gap between Quebec and the rest of Canada in the 1960s. But in reality, moving toward unity between the two groups was difficult.

The 1960s were marked in Eastern Canada by a movement of social change, including a redefinition of Quebec identity, which led to the rise of militant nationalism in la Belle Province.

Raymond Hébert, political scientist and author of *La révolution tranquille au Manitoba français*, studied this movement and its repercussions in the rest of Canada:

“In the 1960s, Quebecers wanted to control their destiny. There was a rise in nationalism and sovereignty, including the creation in October 1968 of the Parti Québécois, which advocated for the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada with its English-speaking majority.”

Against this separatism, the Prime Minister of Canada, Lester B. Pearson, and his government established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, co-chaired by André Laurendeau, publisher of the Quebec newspaper *Le Devoir*, and Davidson Dunton, President of Carleton University in Ottawa.

Hébert explains: “The objective was to conduct an in-depth analysis of the situation of French in Canada and to reflect on what could be done to better develop and promote linguistic duality between Anglophones and Francophones across Canada.”

The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, published in 1969, led to the *Official Languages Act* of September 1969.

Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, who became Prime Minister of Canada in April 1968, “decided to act quickly,” said Hébert, “because nationalism in Quebec was a real threat to Canadian federalism and to the dream of a bilingual country from coast to coast

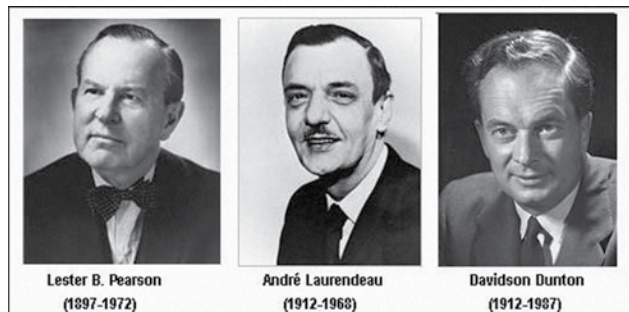


Photo courtesy of *La Liberté* Magazine

to coast. We had to make the rest of the country attractive to Francophones in Quebec without delay, to show them that they were at home everywhere in Canada, in their own language.”

Some 25 years after the passage of the Act, Canadian unity has survived two secession attempts by Quebec: in 1980, the people of Quebec voted No to separation by about 60%; in 1995, the No narrowly won by only 50.58%.

WHAT DOES THE ACT SAY?

According to Hébert, “the 1969 Act takes a functional, not a community-based approach to bilingualism. It was primarily intended to ensure that the federal public service was bilingual, so that bilingual services could be offered throughout Canada.”

In the early 1960s, only 9% of the federal public service was francophone, and French speakers were absent from key positions and from federal offices in Ottawa.

Michel Lagacé was working as an economist for the federal government when the *Official Languages Act* was adopted: “It was a totally anglophone environment. I was the only Francophone and my language was not recognized. French as a language of work was unthinkable.”

“When the Act was passed, there was a strong sense of injustice among Anglophones, who were denied access to designated bilingual positions,” added Hébert. “There were even some very heated demonstrations by Anglophones who were enraged that French could be considered an official language and that bilingualism was being touted as an essential Canadian value.”



Pierre Elliott Trudeau
Courtesy of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Canada’s first Commissioner of Official Languages, Keith Spicer, also remembers a cold welcome from some quarters: “When I arrived to take up my duties in Ottawa in April 1970, I received a warrant for arrest 15 minutes later because I was part of the ‘illegal cabal of the *Official Languages Act*’! Similarly, when I had been sent across the country to test the atmosphere before my appointment, I arrived in Calgary and was whistled at and insulted.”

He quickly realized that before furthering the cause of official languages, he needed first to promote its acceptance. “The main challenge of my mandate was to dispel mistrust between the various groups and transform a painful debate into a mutually respectful dialogue. There was a lot of prejudice, even racism.”

“I saw mistrust among Anglophones and skepticism among Quebecers. There were also new Canadians who did not understand why there were only two official languages. The atmosphere was toxic.”

Born an Anglophone, but completely bilingual, Keith Spicer turned himself into the champion of linguistic duality, explaining its *raison d’être* to all Canadians.

“With my two weapons, laughter and calculated provocation, I spoke to both communities with equal dignity. To forget who was first, who is more numerous. I also made sure to recognize Quebec’s unique place in the Canadian Confederation, an absolute prerequisite for achieving Canadian unity. It was a real seduction campaign, involving bridge building and creating a real dialogue.”

– Keith Spicer

“With my two weapons, laughter and calculated provocation, I spoke to both communities with equal dignity. To forget who was first, who is more numerous. I also made sure to recognize Quebec’s unique place in the Canadian Confederation, an absolute prerequisite for achieving Canadian unity. It was a real seduction campaign, involving bridge building and creating a real dialogue.”

The Commissioner of Official Languages devoted his entire mandate to trying to unify Canadians around the idea of linguistic duality. Certain crises clearly demonstrated the ongoing resistance to the idea, particularly on the part of Anglophones. One such crisis occurred in connection with the introduction of bilingualism in air traffic control in Quebec in the 1970s.

According to Hébert: “This crisis, which lasted about five years, was probably the worst and most symbolic battle of anglophone resistance to bilingualism.”

The problem: in the early 1970s, English was the only language allowed in air communications, both commercial and private, throughout Canada, including Quebec.

With the *Official Languages Act*, French-speaking pilots, particularly in Quebec, claimed their right to express themselves in French, a demand categorically rejected by Anglophones.

“The key argument of the Anglophones was the safety of the public and the pilots. They said: If you make French even optional in air communications, it will be very dangerous because our Anglophone pilots will not understand.” Hébert said. “Whereas Francophone pilots are in any case obliged to learn English in order to become official pilots.”

The crisis was not resolved until the fall of 1979, when Joe Clark's federal government, elected in May 1979, accepted the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry on Bilingualism in Air Traffic Control Services in Quebec, which unanimously recommended the implementation of bilingualism in air traffic control. In fact, studies showed that it would increase, not compromise, safety. The Commission had begun its work in the fall of 1976.

MAINLY SYMBOLIC ARGUMENTS

Raymond Hébert continues: “Anglophones have often found rational arguments to resist the use of French, such as security, cost or access to federal employment for unilingual Anglophones. Whether there was any truth at all in these arguments, they originated primarily from the anti-Francophone side of the equation.”

Indeed, the experts of the Commission of Inquiry demonstrated the baselessness of the safety argument. As for access to employment, “there was never any question of all federal positions being bilingual. Today, especially in the West, 97% of federal positions are not designated bilingual. Anglophones have therefore always had many job opportunities there.”

ENGLISH TRADITION

If it is difficult to get bilingualism accepted, it is also because, traditionally in the public service, French was banned in favour of English.

“The standards of the Canadian public service were established in the early 20th century by The Ottawa Men: a half-

dozen white, English-speaking and Protestant men.” said Hébert.

“They decided that it was imperative that the federal public service function in English. It was forbidden to speak French, or even to send a memo in French. And it was almost impossible for a Francophone to become a minister or deputy minister.”

Until the eve of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada, 95% of work at the federal level was still done in English only.

Today, bilingualism in the Canadian public service and the importance of hiring bilingual people in certain designated positions are achievements that no political party would question.

But as Michel Lagacé states, “there is still work to be done. If the department head or minister is Anglophone, too often, everything happens in English. And Francophones still have to fight regularly to get good quality services in French.”

Nevertheless, according to Ronald Caza, a lawyer specializing in Francophone minority rights, “the *Official Languages Act* has sent a clear message that in Canada, rather than a majority and a minority, there are in fact two official language communities of equal value, and this at all levels, that must be respected, recognized and served in their language.”

ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS CARE ABOUT THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* – THEY JUST DON'T KNOW IT

MARION SANDILANDS practices civil litigation, constitutional and administrative law at Conway Baxter Wilson LLP. After her call to the bar, she served as a law clerk to the Honourable Andromache Karakatsanis at the Supreme Court of Canada. She teaches Canadian Federalism Law at the University of Ottawa. She has appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada on matters of constitutional law and language rights.

Growing up as an English-speaker in Quebec during the 1990s, language politics could be confusing and sometimes scary, but I knew two things for sure: Quebec was officially a French-speaking province, but Canada was officially a bilingual country. I didn't really understand what this meant, but I knew these things to be true.

I had never heard of the *Official Languages Act* – the law that made Canada a bilingual country. On the other hand, I had definitely heard of Bill 101, the *Charter of the French Language* – the law that made Quebec a French-speaking province. I suspect this remains true for most English-speaking Quebecers today. The conversation around language tends to focus on Quebec's language law and policy and tends to overlook the federal framework. But it's always there, humming in the background.

I also suspect that deep down, English-speaking Quebecers are aware that although their province's official policy is one of unilingualism, a different policy operates out of Ottawa. Perhaps they are less aware of the many ways in which that policy operates in the province. They may also be less aware of the special place that Quebec's English-speaking minority occupies within the framework of the *Official Languages Act*.

To English-speaking Quebecers, the Act is a welcome counterpoint to Quebec's policy, even if it is constantly over-

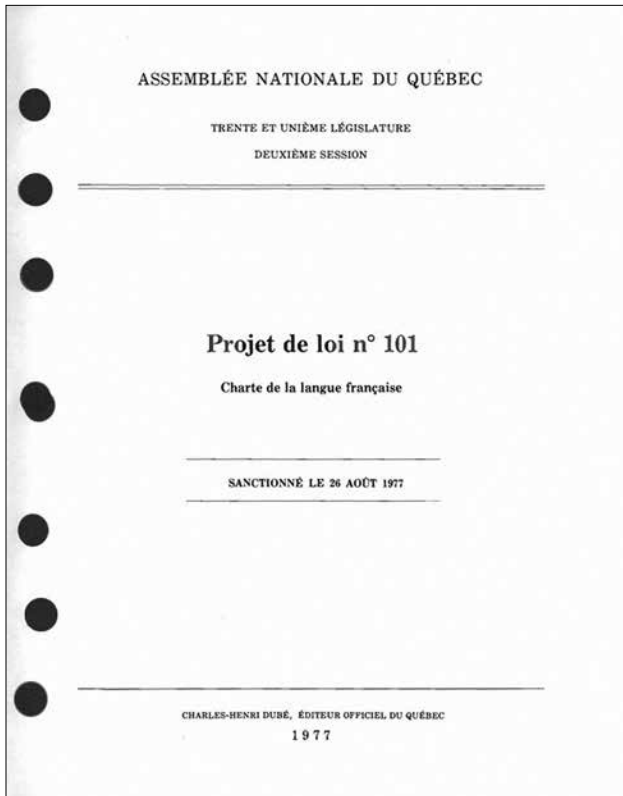
shadowed by that policy. Nevertheless, the Act is connected with English-speaking Quebecers, even if that connection is only latent.

THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* FRAMES LANGUAGE AS A WIN-WIN

When the *Official Languages Act* was first passed in 1969, it made Canada a bilingual country. Since 1982, Canada's official bilingualism has been enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. That bilingualism is a beacon to English-speakers in Quebec, who live in an officially French-speaking province.

But the Act contains a deeper idea that holds even more hope for English-speaking Quebecers: it frames linguistic duality as a win-win.

Does the vitality of one language community diminish the vitality of others? Growing up as an anglo-Quebecer, I often encountered an attitude of competition between English and French in the province: English and French were in a battle for dominance, and the success of one language would come at the expense of the other. I think this attitude continues to pervade discussions about language in the province. However, the *Official Languages Act* frames the question of linguistic



duality in a radically different way.

The Act uses the concept of “linguistic minority community”¹ Under the Act’s logic, there are linguistic minority communities in every province and territory. The Act declares that as a matter of policy, these linguistic minorities should be served and protected.² In other words, the Act declares that the vitality of linguistic minority communities in is a policy goal, a good thing for Canada! There is no sense that the vitality of a linguistic minority in any way takes away from the vitality of the majority. These are not mutually exclusive; quite the opposite: the vitality of a minority contributes to the vitality of society as a whole.

How does this play out in Quebec? As the only English-speaking linguistic minority, Quebec’s English-speaking minority has a special place within the Act’s framework! In this way, the Act recognizes Quebec’s English-speaking minority, confers rights upon it, and declares that the vitality of this community

is to be encouraged. The Act sends a message to Quebec’s English-speaking minority: We see you, and you matter. You are good for Quebec and good for Canada.

Do English-speaking Quebecers care about this message? I bet they would if they heard it more often from their federal leaders. While the idea is rarely invoked, it remains part of the DNA of the Act. It is there for the taking.

THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT IS ALIVE IN QUEBEC

The Act’s recognition of English-speaking Quebecers is not merely symbolic: it comes with specific rights and entitlements. Many of these play out behind the scenes. For example, the Act is the reason that Quebecers can access federal services in English. Under Part IV, English-speakers in Quebec can interact with federal institutions in the language of their choice³: think post offices, federal hiring, grants, EI, CPP, veterans’ benefits, and Elections Canada, among others. Part V and VI provide guarantees for English-speaking Quebecers working in federal institutions. Under Part IX, there is a right to complain to the Commissioner of Official Languages when these rights are not respected. Part VII provides the vehicle for federal funding for the English-speaking minority in a host of areas including education, health, justice, culture, and community-building.

“The Act sends a message to Quebec’s English-speaking minority: We see you, and you matter. You are good for Quebec and good for Canada.”

- Marion Sandilands

The Act’s implementation is not perfect: for example, English-speakers are still underrepresented in the federal public service in Quebec outside the National Capital Region.⁴

However, the Act’s recognition and ongoing support are crucial in a province where successive provincial governments have shown various levels of ambivalence toward the English-speaking minority.

1 See for e.g. *Official Languages Act*, RSC 1985, c 31 (4th Supp), s 2(b) [Act].

2 Act, ss 2(b) and 41.

3 As a lawyer, I must point out that the Part IV rights are limited and qualified, but I do not intend to cover these limits.

4 Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat, Annual report on Official Languages 2015-16, Catalogue No BT23-1E-PDF (2017) at Table 13, which shows 9.7% English-speakers in core public service outside the National Capital Region. This is lower than the proportion of English-speakers in the province as a whole, which stands at 13.7%, according to the 2016 Census.

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

These days, there is a lot of talk in some circles about modernizing the Act. Both the House of Commons and Senate Committees on Official Languages just completed studies about it.⁵ The Commissioner of Official Languages has developed a position on it.⁶ Leading up to the last federal election, the Minister of Official Languages made a cross-country tour on the topic. It's in her current mandate letter.

But what does modernization entail? To me, it cannot be merely a technical exercise. We can't know where we are going until we know where we've been.

We must remember that *Official Languages Act* was forged in crisis. In 1969, it was a response to the rise of nationalism in Quebec. This nationalism was based in part on the exclusion of francophones from leadership positions within Quebec and within the federal ranks.

The recognition of official bilingualism in 1969 was a major national moment, to be sure. It led to the entrenchment of this same principle in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Meanwhile, successive provincial governments in Quebec developed Quebec's own language policy, and that policy is in tension with Ottawa's policy.

Since 1969, the Act has only been significantly amended twice: first in 1988, to implement new constitutional rights from the Charter; second, in 2005, to strengthen the obligations in Part VII of the Act.

The 2005 amendment was a Senate bill, not a government bill, and it took many attempts to get through Parliament. It was spear-headed by Senator Jean-Robert Gauthier, a Franco-Ontarian dedicated to improving the status of French in Canada. However, the Bill was not universally accepted, even among francophones. Even though the Bloc Québécois acknowledged that the Bill was mainly aimed at improving the status of French outside Quebec, it opposed the amendment on the grounds that it might trench on Quebec's jurisdiction to implement its own language policy.⁷ Herein we see the tension play out.

Aside from that 2005 amendment, the Act has remained untouched. No sitting government has attempted to bring any substantive amendments to the Act since 1988.

As such, the Act is – and remains – a political hot potato. Want to stir the constitutional pot? Try amending the *Official Languages Act*.

This is why I think modernization needs to be approached carefully. Is it really a technical exercise, to just “fix” some shortcomings in the Act or just “update” it for the new century? Or will it involve opening up old wounds – and are we ready for that? In my experience, conversations about language law do not remain in the technical realm for very long.

“The Act is – and remains – a political hot potato. Want to stir the constitutional pot? Try amending the *Official Languages Act*.”

– Marion Sandilands

When it comes to modernization, what is up for debate? So far, I have only seen conversations happening among linguistic minorities across Canada, and, not surprisingly, there is a high degree of consensus: The Act should provide stronger protections and support to these same linguistic minority communities. But I have not yet seen the conversation enter the broader national arena. When it hits that arena, I suspect the questions will be broader and the consensus will disappear. What is the Act for, and who is it for? Is the Act's framework still relevant? What position will the Quebec government take? Will English-speaking Quebec continue to be recognized under a modernized Act? I suspect that if a sitting government actually introduces amendments to the *Official Languages Act*, we will see that broader debate. And from where I sit, I am not sure where it will lead.

That's why it's important for English-speaking Quebecers to be in the loop about the Act and be part of the conversation. If this broader debate opens up, English-speaking Quebec may need to defend its place under the Act. Otherwise, it risks losing the recognition it never truly appreciated.

5 See Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, 42nd Parl, 1st sess, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th reports, 2018-2019, under its 4-part study on Modernizing the *Official Languages Act*; and House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, 42nd Parl, 1st sess, *Report 17 – Modernization of the Official Languages Act*, June 2019.

6 See Commissioner of Official Languages, *Modernizing the Official Languages Act: The Commissioner of Official Languages' Recommendations for an Act that is Relevant, Dynamic and Strong*, May 2019.

7 See speech by Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ) at Third Reading of Bill S-3, 38th Parl, 1st Sess, 27 October 2005, 1755.

THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF QUEBEC

SOME PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

ANTHONY HOUSEFATHER is the Federal Member of Parliament representing the riding of Mount Royal. He is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour.

We have just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act*. At the same time, we are also about to enter into a year where the law is supposed to be modernized. The English-speaking community of Quebec needs to be deeply involved in this process. Organizations, individuals and our elected representatives.

In early 2019, I stood up in the House of Commons to oppose Bill C-420 which would have required federal civil servants in Quebec to work under the rules of the *Charter of the French Language* as opposed to the *Official Languages Act*. I stood up three times in a row, as all of my Liberal, Conservative and NDP colleagues allowed me to continue to challenge the Bloc Québécois member who proposed the private members' bill. I pointed out that this proposed change would allow federal civil servants who were English-speaking Canadians outside of Quebec to work in English, federal civil servants who were French-speaking Canadians in Quebec to work in French and federal civil servants who were French-speaking Canadians working outside Quebec in bilingual areas to work in French. The only federal civil servants who would lose the right to work in their own language were English-speaking civil servants in areas of Quebec designated as bilingual areas.

AN UNCONSCIONABLE ATTACK

The bill was an unconscionable attack on a minority community that might have gone unnoticed by most of my colleagues,

if not for my passionate interventions. As this was a private members' bill with little support among MPs, it was unlikely to ever be adopted by the House of Commons. However, it should be noted that the New Democratic and Green party MPs joined the Bloc in voting to send this Bill to committee. As a community, English-speaking Quebecers need to remain vigilant when it comes to protecting our linguistic rights. This includes at the federal level.

As someone whose roots are deeply engrained in English-speaking Quebec, I take my role as a representative of my community in Parliament very seriously. Not only do I represent everyone living in my riding, but I also know that I have a special responsibility to view every proposed law and every proposed policy from the lens of how it impacts official language minority communities. This includes the English-speaking residents of my riding, the English-speaking residents of greater Montreal and English-speaking communities across Quebec, whether in the Townships, the Gaspé, the Outaouais, the Laurentians, the Quebec City Region, the Mauricie, the Saguenay or anywhere else. It also includes French-speaking communities across Canada. Thanks to the principles of the *Official Languages Act*, which gives English and French equal status in the Government of Canada and in all the services it controls, I have a lot of ammunition to defend the rights of minority language communities.

In 2018, Mona Fortier, the Member of Parliament for Ottawa Vanier, and I were able to amend Bill C-78 to ensure that all Canadians had the right to obtain a divorce in either English

or French. We were able to do this because representatives of minority language communities were present at committee when the bill was being discussed and we were able to persuade our colleagues of the importance of these language rights. While this issue was not part of the *Official Languages Act*, we were able to argue its principles when discussing our amendment with our colleagues.

“ I encourage you to reach out to your Member of Parliament to emphasize just how important this law is to all of us and how important it is that the modifications to the law which will soon be tabled be ones that are supported by our community.”

- Anthony Housefather, MP

When it came to the discussion on Bill C-420, it was critical that I was able to speak to the relevant Minister and my colleagues about the reasons that the application of the *Charter of the French Language* to the federal civil service would deeply impact not only those English-speaking Quebecers in the civil service, but also those English-speaking Quebecers expecting to receive English services from the federal government, as they are entitled to under the *Official Languages Act*.

Most outside our community are completely unaware that English-speaking Quebecers are terribly under-represented in the Quebec Civil Service. We make up about 1% of the provincial civil service despite making up more than 10% of the population. This compares to English-speaking Quebecers representing about 7.4% of the Quebec civil service back in 1941! The 1% figure has not moved since the early 1970s. While systemic discrimination and hiring policies are likely part of the issue, another important component is that many fluently bilingual English-speaking Quebecers have been loath to work in a civil service which, by law, functions entirely in French.

While we are also somewhat under-represented in some departments within the federal civil service in Quebec, we are also over-represented in others and much closer to our percentage within the general population. This is likely because English-speaking Quebecers perceive the federal civil service, which functions in both languages in bilingual regions such as Montreal or the National Capital region, as a work environment in which they feel comfortable. That would no longer be the case if the *Charter of the French Language* applied to the federal civil service in Quebec.

The Official Language Act also allows the federal government to require many positions in Quebec to be filled by individuals capable of offering the public services in both English

and French. The ability to require bilingualism for positions is significantly different under the *Charter of the French Language*. As such, the adoption of Bill C-420 would have impacted English-speaking Quebecers seeking services as well.

These are the kind of issues I raise with my colleagues. I sensitize them to the reasons why we need to intervene when the Ontario Government cuts services for French-speaking Ontarians. I sensitize them to why it is important to the community in the lower Laurentians to have bilingual signs at the Lachute Hospital; why not only historic members of the English-speaking community should be entitled to receive services in English; and why it is important for all official language communities to control and manage their school boards. I see this as an important extension of my role as an MP and work closely with QCGN and other partners within the English-speaking community to make sure our voices are heard in Parliament.

WE NEED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH GOVERNMENT

We are very lucky that we currently have a federal Government and a Minister of Official Languages that are deeply committed to promoting the vitality and development of both French-speaking minorities outside Quebec and the English-speaking minority in Quebec. We need to work with the Government to ensure that, as the Official Language Act is modernized this year, its changes enhance the ability of our community to thrive.

This includes ensuring that we recognize the need for consultation with French-speaking communities outside Quebec and English-speaking communities across Quebec on issues relevant to our communities. This includes ensuring that members of linguistic minorities in the federal civil service can work in their language as much as possible and be promoted in their home provinces. This also includes providing for effective implementation of all parts of the *Official Languages Act* and ensuring that we define what positive measures the Government of Canada will take to promote official language communities across the country.

We are currently faced with a challenge. There are those who argue that there should be an asymmetric treatment of English-speaking Quebecers and French-speaking minorities outside Quebec. With the Bloc Québécois being represented on the House Official Language Committee in this Parliament, these arguments will no doubt be made. We need to be vigilant in not permitting asymmetry. We need to adapt to specific needs in each community – which may be different for English-speakers in Gaspé versus Montreal or French speakers in New Brunswick versus Saskatchewan – but we cannot ever abandon the principle that all official language minor-

ities throughout Canada must be protected equally under the *Official Languages Act*. I pledge to defend that principle loudly and clearly.

DEMISTIFY THE OFFICIAL LANGAGES ACT

On this 50th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act* it is important for English-speaking Quebecers to learn more about how we are protected under this law and determine how we can best use these legal protections to ensure the vitality and development of our community, both as individuals and as institutions that represent us.

I encourage you to reach out to your Member of Parliament to emphasize just how important this law is to all of us and how important it is that the modifications to the law which will soon be tabled be ones that are supported by our community. We are more than one million strong and we cannot be silent and invisible at a time when decisions which will affect our community for a generation are being made.

HOW MIXED UP ARE ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS?

JACK JEDWAB is the President and CEO of the Association for Canadian Studies and of the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking about possible restrictions on access to certain government services, the province's Immigration and Francization and Integration Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette said that services in the English language would be limited to members of the "historic English minority". This reference gave rise to much debate as to the definition and possible criteria for so-called historic English Quebecers.

In the National Assembly, one MNA asked if Jolin-Barrette was referring to English-speaking Quebecers born in Quebec and/or English-speaking Canadians born in other provinces? Would English-speaking Quebecers need an identification card or a personal identification number to interact in English when securing some government services?

Not surprisingly, the Minister refused to elaborate, but he added that any limits to the offer of service in English would not "undermine the rights of Anglophones in Quebec..." Ironically the ensuing controversy contributed to the ongoing conversation over the criteria used by governments and community organizations to determine the numbers of English-speaking Quebecers as well as the underlying considerations that drive their choice(s).

Calculating the number of Quebecers on the basis of their language background(s) can have a bearing on the estimated numbers of French speakers as well as on the 'others' – that

is persons whose first language is neither English nor French and/or speak a non-official language most often in their homes. That is because, depending on the selected criteria for some observers, one more or one less English-speaking Quebecer may mean one more or one less Francophone or Allophone. Dual and multiple choices make the calculation all the more challenging. That which follows will briefly review the sources and methods employed to assess the numbers of Quebec English speakers and focus on the distribution of dual and multiple language identifiers. It is contended that over the years Statistics Canada may be underestimating such responses in the effort assign such persons to one and/or the other language group.

ESTIMATING ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS?

In Canada, the estimated numbers of members of minority official language communities is generally collected via the census questions on language knowledge and/or language use. Where people identify with more than one language group, the census authorities generally distribute them equally between the two official language communities. Sometimes the final tally is influenced by political rather than sociological considerations (though the two are not unrelated).

The number that is ultimately established can be especially important to Canada's official language minorities as it helps government estimate the required level of services. The fed-

eral government has a legislative commitment to support the vitality of official language minorities and therefore needs to know the numbers of Francophones/French speakers outside of Quebec and Anglophones/English speakers in the province as well as in regions within it. The province also provides services to English speakers but at times its commitment to do so is presented as an expression of good will rather than a legislative obligation.

As much as possible the census of Canada language questions attempt to situate respondents within the single box in which they best fit via questions on mother tongue (language first learned and still understood) and the language spoken most often at home. In his 1967 book, *Languages in Conflict*, Richard Joy collects information on language and ethnic origin in documenting the evolution of language communities within and outside of Quebec. Joy noted that “...During the past hundred years, there has been a great change in the linguistic composition of Quebec. No longer is English the only language heard in the Eastern Townships and the Ottawa Valley. No longer are English-speaking citizens in the majority at Montreal, as they were until 1865, and the few still to be found at Quebec City, give no indication of the pre-Confederation strength of the English language in La Veille Capitale.”

ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS IN THE MIX

Things seemed much simpler at the time that Joy published his seminal work, as more limited degrees of mixing between the two language groups made for fewer people that identified as dual and/or multiple -in other words fewer people saying that they were English and/or French and/or other. But that has changed considerably in large measure owing to the substantial increase in rates of bilingualism amongst Quebec

Anglophones, Francophones and persons whose first language is neither English nor French, commonly referred to as Allophones.

The rise in bilingualism meant a reduction in social barriers and heightened opportunities for interaction between language groups. To be fair, prior to the 1960s, that has often been characterized as the prevalent era for the two language solitudes, there was still some degree of mixing even where language barriers were compounded by religious ones. A popular generalization at that time equated being Protestant with being English and Catholic with being French. In line with that generalization, when French-speaking Jews first arrived from North Africa in the later 1960s, some thought of them as “Catholic” Jews.

Since then, language mixing has increased substantially, and is reflected in various ways. As observed below, more than one in four Montrealers with English as mother tongue are married to Francophones. In Quebec City the majority of persons with English mother tongue are married to Francophones.

A 2018 survey conducted by Léger Marketing reveals that some three in four English Quebecers often and sometimes interact with French-speaking friends, as do a majority in their workplace setting.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS GETTING OUT OF THE BOX

Looking at the census results prior to looking at these other questions, it might be assumed that there are at least seven possible responses (English, French, Other, English and French, English and other, French and other and English, French and other). In fact, there are only three responses

TABLE 1: THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE (IN BRACKETS) OF ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE QUEBECERS MARRIED OR WITH A COMMON-LAW PARTNER THAT IS ENGLISH, FRENCH OR OTHER MOTHER TONGUE IN MONTREAL, QUEBEC CITY AND SHERBROOKE, 2016

English Mother tongue – Quebec 2016	Total – Mother tongue of married spouse or common-law partner	English	French	Other/ Allophone
Montreal	87,700	53,485 (62%)	21,965 (26%)	10,525 (12%)
Quebec City	3,850	1,550 (41%)	2,140 (55%)	135 (4%)
Sherbrooke	2,605	1,405 (54%)	1,095 (43%)	80 (3%)

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2016

TABLE 2: PERSONS WITH ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE THAT OFTEN, SOMETIMES, RARELY OR NEVER HAVE CONTACT WITH QUEBECERS WHO SPEAK FRENCH AT WORK, SCHOOL OR WITH FRIENDS

English	Do you often, sometimes, rarely or never have contact with Quebecers who speak French		
	At work	At school	With friends
Often	44.30%	17.2%	45.8%
Sometimes	17.2%	8.9%	30.2%
Rarely	7.3%	5.2%	17.2%
Never	1.6%	6.3%	6.8%
Does not apply	29.7%	62.5%	–
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies and the Quebec Community Groups Network, May 2018

respectively listed below the questions on mother tongue and language spoken at home. The numbers of dual and/or multiple respondents arise from those respondents that determine that they can't be defined by one of the three options provided.

Statistics Canada may legitimately argue that the question does not prevent respondents from checking more than one box. On the other hand, it doesn't encourage them to do so. This could be done by adding a statement to the questions on mother tongue (MT) or language spoken most often at home (LSH), such as "specify as many origins [responses] as applicable" (a formulation used in the census question on ethnic origins). Doing this is not without its own set of challenges as regards establishing the number of persons that identify with language group(s) but it may nonetheless permit respondents to more accurately reflect their situation(s). It's also true that as things currently stand, the census results on language give rise to a large variation in the estimated number of those who qualify as English Quebecers.

Below one observes that across the spectrum in Quebec in 2016, from the single declaration of English mother tongue to the derived variable first official language spoken (FOLS) English, there is a difference of over 350 000 persons. The difference between mother tongue English and FOLS rises to about 500 000, when those counted as FOLS English and French (275630) are divided equally between French and English

groups, thus bringing the total of the English group to nearly 1.1 million (960 110 plus 137 815) FOLS English).

As noted below, the FOLS category which is used by minority language community organizations and by the federal government is not a census question but a derived variable. The FOLS figure is arrived at by taking the English mother tongue number plus:

- Allophones that report they speak English only;
- half of those declaring knowledge of English and French among those with a non-official mother tongue;
- half of those declaring both English and French mother tongue;
- persons declaring English and Non-Official language and;
- half of those declaring English, French and a non-official language as mother tongue.

The net effect of this calculation is to reduce to population of neither English nor French mother tongue – the Allophones – to 1%.

TABLE 3: NUMBERS OF PERSONS WITH ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE (MT), LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME (LSH) AND FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN (FOLS) IN QUEBEC PROVINCE, MONTREAL AND THE REST OF QUEBEC, 2016

English 2016	Quebec			Montreal			Rest of Quebec		
	MT	LSH	FOLS	MT	LSH	FOLS	MT	LSH	FOLS
	598,050	709,410	960,110	443,950	619,760	764,240	154,100	89,650	195,870

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2016

But the FOLS method is driven by the idea that it is imperative to find out which of the two official language boxes Quebecers ultimately fit in. The federal legislative commitment to support official language minority vitality makes it important to identify all those who might need services in the minority language. But the use of FOLS raises the issue of whether those persons whose first language is neither English nor French can truly be regarded as belonging to the English speaking and/or French-speaking groups, and whether the equal distribution of dual identifiers accurately reflects the group which they identify?

Looking at the FOLS categories on the basis of the languages spoken most often at home, provides some interesting insights. As seen in Table 4 of the 960 110 FOLS English, some 52 145 speak French most often at home (inversely some 71 340 FOLS Francophones spoke English most often at home). As further noted, the vast majority of those who are classified as both English and French speak a non-official language most often at home.

DIFFERENT CRITERIA, DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

Depending on the criteria that is selected, the English-speaking group will display very different characteristics. In effect,

much of the difference in the 500,000 mother tongue English speakers and the FOLS English population, is attributable to the number of immigrants that fall within the latter category. In Table 5 it's seen that the percentage of immigrants in the English FOLS category (28%) is considerably greater than the share of immigrants that are part of the mother tongue English-speaking group (12%). And over the period 2011-2016, there would be more than four times the number of English-speakers with the FOLS criteria as opposed to that of mother tongue.

CONCLUSION: THE RISE OF THE 'FRENGLISH' QUEBEC?

Census numbers on language origin tell us something about respondents' identification based on the criteria that is provided with questions. As identities are often constructed, there is an important complexity that can be difficult to ascertain. The single boxes that are deemed essential for language policies and planning may not capture the nuances that arise from interaction across language groups and mixing. There is a pervasive zero-sum when it comes to individual language choices and it suggests that, in Quebec and elsewhere, you're ultimately English or French. Dual and multiple language identifiers represent a challenge to this vision. A survey conducted in fall 2019 by the firm Léger for the Association for

TABLE 4. CROSS-TABULATION BETWEEN PERSONS WITH FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME, SINGLE AND MULTIPLE RESPONSES, 2016

Quebec 2016	Total – First Official Language Spoken	English	French	English and French	Neither English nor French
Total – Language spoken most often at home	7,965,455	960,110	6,657,465	275,630	72,250
English	780,750	709,410	71,340	0	0
French	6,283,305	52,145	6,231,165	0	0
Non-official language	588,890	126,620	1,72,325	217,690	72,255
English and French	82,940	14,705	36,530	31,695	0
English and non-official language	53,420	52,630	790	0	0
French and non-official language	137,280	855	136,430	0	0
English, French and non-official language	38,870	3,750	8,880	26,235	0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2016

Canadian Studies and the Quebec Community Groups Network reveals that some one in four mother tongue English-speaking Quebecers identify as equally English and French while some 7% of persons whose mother tongue is French consider themselves equally English and French.

The net effect of such mixing implies that there are perhaps more dual than single identifiers in what are counted as the English group. And the figures for the mother tongue English

population outside of Montreal suggest that a majority of the group define themselves as partly French. For some analysts, how they define themselves linguistically is less pertinent, given the need to situate them in one category for purposes of determining how services and community resources are allocated. Nonetheless, the vastly underestimated number and percentage of mixed linguistic persons in Quebec, are most certainly real and need more attention in determining how best to situate them in language policy, planning and politics.

TABLE 5: ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE, LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME AND FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME, IMMIGRANT STATUS AND ENTRANTS OVER THE PERIOD 2011-2016

Quebec 2016 – English only	Mother Tongue	Language, spoken most often at home	First Official Language Spoken
Total – Immigrant status and period of immigration 2011-2016	598,050	709,410	960,110
Non-immigrants	518,310	554,710	660,570
Immigrants	71,760 (12%)	140,925 (20%)	270,005 (28%)
2011 à 2016	9,075	1,995	39,635

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2016

TABLE 6: "WHEN THINKING ABOUT MY LANGUAGE IDENTITY(IES) I CONSIDER MYSELF" AMONG MOTHER TONGUE ENGLISH AND FRENCH QUEBEGERS

	French	English
NET ENGLISH	2%	71%
English only	1%	32%
English mostly and partly French	1%	39%
Equally English and French	7%	25%
NET FRENCH	91%	4%
French mostly and partly English	36%	4%
French only	55%	0%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies and the Quebec Community Groups Network, May 2018

DO WE NEED TO KNOW OUR LANGUAGE RIGHTS?

A SURVEY OF QUEBECERS KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

JACK JEDWAB is President and CEO of the Association for Canadian Studies and of the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration.

In 1969, the government of Canada adopted the *Official Languages Act*. The legislation was a response to the findings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which in the early part of that decade reported that relations between English and French Canadians had deteriorated to a point where the two groups' will to live together was in jeopardy. Canadians were thus warned that, while they might not be fully conscious of it, their nation was perhaps passing through its greatest crisis. Efforts aimed at reconciling language and cultural difference between English and French-speaking Canadians has been a defining characteristic of the country's history. In 1969, the *Official Languages Act* was widely hailed as the most important legislative measure aimed at addressing historic concerns about minority language rights, restoring rights that had been taken away from certain minority language communities and attempting to establish a legal framework upon which to rebuild the relationship between the country's official language minorities and majorities.

One would think that this foundational law would be mentioned in the provincial history curriculum that reviews the evolution of language rights in the country or touches on relations between language groups. That, however, is generally not the case. A cursory review of the high school history curriculum in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick shows that there are no references made to the

Official Languages Act where the issue of language arises. In the Quebec Ministry of Education's *Histoire du Québec et du Canada, Troisième et quatrième secondaire* (2017), one finds the following passage on language questions: "Les questions nationales et celles des droits linguistiques, sur lesquels portent les projets de loi 63, 22 et 101, accaparent les actions et les débats des vingt années suivantes, les années 1960 marquant une rupture dans l'histoire du Québec".

Similarly the documentation in the province of Ontario that aims to guide high school educators in the Grade 9 and 10 program on Canadian and World Studies – geography, history, civics (politics), offers the following description: "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A part of the Constitution Act, 1982, the Charter guarantees Canadians fundamental freedoms as well as various rights, including democratic, mobility, legal, and equality rights. It recognizes the multicultural heritage of Canadians, and protects official language rights and the rights of Aboriginal Canadians."² (p 180)

For its part, the province of New Brunswick's history program in the English sector offers a detailed section on Quebec politics and instructs educators to discuss the Quiet Revolution, the October Crisis, the constitutional debates of the 1980s and the 1995 referendum, all with the laudable aim of enhancing students' knowledge of the evolution of relations between English and French Canadians.³

1 education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/education/jeunes/pfeq/PFEQ_histoire-quebec-canada_2017.pdf

2 www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/canworldg10curr2018.pdf

3 www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/curric/SocialStudies/CanadianHistory122.pdf

There are many places outside of the country's high schools to learn about Canada's *Official Languages Act* and there has been a considerable amount written about the legislation in a variety of media. In the context of this year's 50th anniversary, the legislation has been the object of ample discussion in the national media. Nonetheless, there are few studies that provide a detailed overview of knowledge about the *Official Languages Act* amongst Canadians and how such knowledge affects attitudes towards minority official language communities and knowledge of official languages. Since its inception, the *Official Languages Act* national conversations about language duality have often fallen prey to misinformation, and officials have made multiple efforts to set the record straight with for example "myth and fact" sheets amongst other responses.

The survey results below ask Quebecers to self-assess their knowledge about the *Official Languages Act* (hereafter OLA).

The findings are based on a 2019 poll conducted by the firm Léger Marketing, for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, via web panel, between August 29 and September 4, 2019, with a sample of 1,937 Quebecers which included 1,019 English-speaking Quebecers, 773 French-speaking Quebecers and 144 persons whose first language is neither English nor French.

The poll reveals that some 54% of Quebecers believe they possess a good knowledge of Canada's *Official Languages Act*. A closer look at the results of the poll indicate that only 5% feel they possess a very good knowledge, and most respondents who are purportedly 'in the know' regard their knowledge of the OLA as "somewhat good". As observed in Table 1, English-speaking Quebecers are most likely to indicate that they have a good knowledge of the OLA, but over one-third report that their knowledge is poor.

TABLE 1. HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT? BY MOTHER TONGUE

	Total	French	English	Other
NET GOOD	54%	55%	61%	50%
Very good	5%	4%	11%	10%
Somewhat good	49%	50%	50%	41%
NET POOR	42%	42%	36%	45%
Somewhat poor	34%	35%	27%	36%
Very poor	8%	7%	9%	10%
I prefer not to answer	4%	4%	4%	4%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

The table that follows looks at the extent to which self-assessed knowledge of the OLA facilitates the recognition of four key elements of the OLA as (1) equal status of English and French with respect to their use in institutions of Parliament and the Government of Canada; (2) Canadians benefitting from federal services in the official language of their choice; (3) ensuring the development and vitality of official language minority communities; (4) supporting the rights of official language minority communities.

As observed below, those reporting very good knowledge of the OLA are more likely to agree than others with the list of commitments that fall within the OLA. But the gaps between the self-assessed most and least knowledgeable about the OLA are not attributable to the level of disagreement with its key elements, but is rather a function of not being equipped with sufficient knowledge. The most know-

ledgeable are most inclined to agree that the Government of Canada enables Canadians to benefit from federal services in the official language of their choice.

Comparing the views of the Quebec's language groups around the key elements of the OLA, the province's non-Francophones are far more likely than the province's Francophones to agree that "the Government of Canada is committed to equal status of English and French with respect to their use in institutions of Parliament and the Government of Canada". There is also divergence of opinion between Francophones and non-Francophones over the extent to which they respectively believe that the Government of Canada ensures the development and vitality of official language minority communities and supports the rights of official language minority communities.

TABLE 2: EVALUATION OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND RECOGNITION/AGREEMENT WITH THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Net Agree	How would you evaluate your knowledge of Canada's Official Languages Act			
	Very good	Somewhat good	Somewhat poor	Very poor
The government of Canada is committed to equal status of English and French with respect to their use in institutions of Parliament and the Government of Canada	69.20%	57.90%	51.7%	48.3%
The Government of Canada ensures the development and vitality of official language minority communities	65.1%	47.5%	46%	40%
The Government of Canada enables Canadians to benefit from federal services in the official language of their choice	81.2%	73.6%	71.7%	66%
The Government of Canada supports the rights of official language minority communities	76.2%	60.6%	52.9%	46.9%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

TABLE 3: RECOGNITION/AGREEMENT WITH KEY ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT BY MOTHER TONGUE

Net Agree	Total	French	English	Other
The government of Canada is committed to equal status of English and French with respect to their use in institutions of Parliament and the government of Canada	55%	50%	72%	70%
The Government of Canada enables Canadians to benefit from federal services in the official language of their choice	72%	70%	82%	79%
The Government of Canada ensures the development and vitality of official language minority communities	47%	42%	56%	65%
The Government of Canada supports the rights of official language minority communities	57%	52%	66%	74%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

The poll further inquired into the manner in which Quebecers would respond to an open question where asked to briefly describe how they see the main objective of the OLA. In this top of mind approach, Francophones are most likely to see the OLA's main objective as providing services in both languages, while non-francophones are more likely to believe that it aims to ensure equality between the two languages.

Amongst Quebecers, it is the non-francophone population that is most likely to agree that supporting the two official languages in Canada is an important part of what it means to be a Canadian. Still, nearly two in three Quebec Francophones agree that such support is important to what it means to be Canadian.

TABLE 4: DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE WHAT YOU SEE AS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT BY MOTHER TONGUE, FRENCH, ENGLISH AND OTHER

	Total	French	French	Other
Ensure that a service is provided in both languages	18%	20%	14%	11%
Ensure that a governmental service is provided in both languages	11%	12%	10%	8%
Protect/preserve both official languages	11%	11%	11%	8%
Protect the French language / keep the French language alive	9%	10%	5%	9%
Ensure the equality between the two languages	8%	7%	11%	15%
Bilingualism / promoting bilingualism	7%	7%	7%	4%
Promote/respect the two official languages	5%	4%	8%	6%
Ensure the equality/equity between francophones and anglophones / between citizens	4%	4%	4%	4%
Respecting minority rights	4%	4%	2%	1%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

TABLE 5: SUPPORTING TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (ENGLISH/FRENCH) IN CANADA IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CANADIAN BY MOTHER TONGUE

For me supporting two official languages (English/French) in Canada is an important part of what it means to be a Canadian	French	English	Other	Total
Strongly agree	23.7%	53.9%	49.5%	30.3%
Somewhat agree	40.2%	33%	38.1%	38.9%
Somewhat disagree	20.2%	6.1%	5.2%	17.1%
Strongly disagree	10.6%	4.3%	6.2%	9.3%
I prefer not to answer	5.4%	2.6%	1%	4.4%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

TABLE 6: EVALUATION OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND SUPPORT FOR TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (ENGLISH/FRENCH) IN CANADA IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CANADIAN

For me supporting two official languages (English/French) in Canada is an important part of what it means to be a Canadian	How would you evaluate your knowledge of Canada's <i>Official languages Act</i>			
	Very good	Somewhat good	Somewhat poor	Very poor
Strongly agree	65.1%	32.2%	24.5%	22.6%
Somewhat agree	19.8%	36.4%	47.1%	31.5%
Somewhat disagree	5.7%	17.7%	17.9%	21.9%
Strongly disagree	8.5%	10.6%	7%	12.3%
I prefer not to answer	0.9%	3.1%	3.5%	11.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

TABLE 7: EVALUATION OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, AND SUPPORT FOR TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (ENGLISH/FRENCH) IN CANADA AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CANADIAN, BY FRENCH MOTHER TONGUE, 2019

For me supporting two official languages (English/French) in Canada is an important part of what it means to be a Canadian	How would you evaluate your knowledge of Canada's <i>Official languages Act</i>			
	Very good	Somewhat good	Somewhat poor	Very poor
Strongly agree	62.9%	26.6%	18.4%	9.5%
Somewhat agree	22.6%	37.0%	48.1%	35.2%

Source: Léger Marketing for the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Association for Canadian Studies, August-September, 2019

As observed above, the poll points to an important relationship between the assessment of OLA knowledge and the extent to which support for official languages is regarded as important to what it means to be Canadian. Those who self-assess with the highest level of knowledge are most likely to agree that supporting the two official languages is important. And, as indicated in Table 7, this is also the case for Quebecers who give themselves the highest self-assessment for knowledge about the OLA.

rights are relevant to all Canadians and knowledge about them should be fundamental not only to thickening awareness about an essential part of the country's history but also in improved understanding about the country's official language minorities.

CONCLUSION

The results of the above analysis for Quebec suggest there is a need to better equip not only Quebecers but other Canadians with knowledge about language rights in Canada. These

ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBEC AND THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

- 1969** • Based on a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, established by the government of Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau legislates the *Official Languages Act*. This Act mandates bilingual access to all federal services. It creates position of Commissioner of Official Languages.
- 1970** • Government of Canada creates official languages in education program. This provides financial support for minority language education and second language instruction.
- 1973** • Federal civil servants permitted to choose English or French as their preferred language of work.
- 1977** • Parti Québécois government of Premier René Lévesque passes Bill 101, *Charter of the French Language*. All public advertising and signage required to be in French. Education in English restricted to children with one parent who attended English elementary school within Quebec.
- 1978** • Government of Canada creates Court Challenges Program. This provides financial assistance to individuals or groups wanting to clarify language rights before courts.
- 1979** • Following challenge of *Charter of the French Language*, Supreme Court of Canada determines in *Blaikie et al v Quebec* that Charter provisions making French sole language of Quebec legislation are unconstitutional.
- 1982** • *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* included in new Canadian Constitution. Charter contains many sections to guarantee and strengthen language rights. Sections 16 to 20 guarantee right to use either official language in Parliament, for certain communications with federal public service, and before federal courts. Section 23 of Charter protects right of parents in official language minority communities to have their children educated in their language and to manage their public educational institutions.
- 1984** • Supreme Court of Canada renders its first decision regarding minority language education, in *A.G. (Quebec) v Quebec Protestant School Boards*. It rules that parents who received instruction in English in Canada have right to send their children to English-language schools in Quebec.
- 1988** • Federal government strengthens *Official Languages Act*. This ensures rights guaranteed by Canadian Charter, strengthens obligations of federal government, and provides Act with preamble and statement of purposes.

- 1988 • In *Ford v Quebec*, Supreme Court rules sections of *Charter of the French Language* dealing with unilingual signs violate principle of freedom of expression. Quebec invokes notwithstanding clause, thus circumventing this ruling.
- 1990 • Supreme Court decision in *Mahe v Alberta* recognizes right of linguistic minority parents to manage and control their educational institutions.
- 1991 • Federal government adopts initial set of official languages regulations. These detail federal obligations regarding communications and services with public.
- 1995 • Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) founded.
- 1998 • Supreme Court renders decision in reference case re Secession of Quebec. Judgment states that Canadian Constitution embraces unwritten as well as written rules. This provides new legal tools to help protect linguistic minority rights.
- 1999 • In *R. v Beaulac*, Supreme Court recognizes that bilingualism means “equal access to services of equal quality.” This means language rights are to be interpreted more purposively, rather than restrictively.
- 2000 • Supreme Court ruling in *Arsenault Cameron v Prince Edward Island* further expands rights governing minority language education. Case advances argument that substantive equality for minority education requires “that official language minorities be treated differently, if necessary, according to their particular circumstances and needs, in order to provide them with a standard of education equivalent to that of the official language majority.”
- 2001 • Stéphane Dion appointed Canada’s first Minister responsible for Official Languages.
- 2003 • Federal government launches first *Action Plan for Official Languages*. With \$750-million budget, Plan designed to enhance vitality of official languages minority communities, improve bilingualism in federal public service, and strengthen linguistic duality across Canada.
- 2003 • In case of *Doucet-Boudreau v. Nova Scotia*, Supreme Court provides further jurisprudence assisting defence of linguistic rights. It confirms that the courts must issue effective, responsive remedies that guarantee full and meaningful protection of the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Charter.
- 2005 • *Official Languages Act* strengthened with adoption of Bill S-3. Amendment clarifies scope of Part VII. It orders federal institutions to take positive measures to enhance vitality of linguistic minority communities.
- 2005 • In *Solsky v. Quebec*, Supreme Court clarifies eligibility criteria for students to attend English public schools in Quebec. Court concludes section 73(2) of *Charter of the French Language* is constitutional when “properly interpreted.” It states that the requirement as set out in that section must involve a qualitative rather than a strict quantitative assessment of a child’s educational experience.
- 2008 • Following 2006 abolition of its Court Challenges Program, federal government creates Language Rights Support Program.
- 2008 • Updating its five-year-old Action Plan, federal government launches *Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality*. This allocates \$1.1 billion to encourage linguistic duality among Canadians and provide support to official language minority communities in five priority areas: Health, Justice, Immigration, Economic Development and Arts and Culture.
- 2009 • In *Nguyen v. Quebec*, Supreme Court deems it unconstitutional to exclude time spent in an unsubsidized English-language private school from what should be considered when assessing a “major part” of a child’s education for purpose of establishing eligibility for enrolment in Quebec’s English public education system.
- 2009 • Another major victory in Supreme Court: ruling in *Desrochers v Canada* confirms that to achieve linguistic equality, federal government may be required to provide services “with distinct content.”

- 2013 • Conservative government introduces the second *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages* renews the \$1.1 billion investment with the focus on education, immigration and communities
- 2015 • Supreme Court determines in *Association des parents de l'école Rose-des-Vents v British Columbia* how to establish equivalence between minority and majority language schools and the education offered.
- 2018 • A new federal *Action Plan for Official Languages* launched, with \$500 million of additional funding. This boosts investment in Official Languages to \$2.2 billion over five years.
- 2019 • Court Challenges Program reinstated by federal government. Its mandate is to provide financial support to Canadians who wish to clarify constitutional and quasi-constitutional official language and human rights issues.
- 2019 • *Official Languages Act* turns 50.

Sources: *50 ans de langue officielle*, *La Liberté Magazine*, Volume 1, Numéro 1, December 2019

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